

The Downfall of Licinius

ished by Licinius's orders at /Emona (Laybach) and war ensued.

The armies met in the autumn of 316 near Cibalis, in Pannonia, between the rivers Drava and Save. Neither Emperor led into the field anything approaching the full strength he was able to muster; Licinius is said to have had only 35,000 men and Constantine no more than 20,000. From Zosimus's highly rhetorical account of the battle* we gather that Constantine chose a position between a steep hill and an impassable morass, and repulsed the charge of the legions of Licinius. Then as he advanced into the plain in pursuit of the enemy, he was checked by some fresh troops which Licinius brought up, and a long and stubborn contest lasted until nightfall, when Constantine decided the fortunes of the day by an irresistible charge. Licinius is said to have lost 20,000 men in this encounter, more than fifty per cent, of his entire force, and he beat a hurried retreat, leaving his camp to be plundered by the victor* whose own losses must also have been severe.

A few weeks later the battle was renewed on the plain of Marcian in Thrace. Licinius had evidently been strongly reinforced from Asia, for, though he was again defeated after a hotly contested battle, he was able to effect an orderly retreat and draw off his beaten troops without disorder—a rare thing in the annals of Roman warfare*, where defeat usually involved destruction, Constantine is said to have